

The Mardi Gras Mystery

By
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"A CARNIVAL JOKE"

GENOISES.—During the height of the New Orleans carnival season Jackin Fell, wealthy though somewhat mysterious citizen, and Dr. Ansel, are discussing a series of robberies by an individual known as the Midnight Masquer, who, invariably attired as an aviator, has long defied the police. Joseph Maillard, wealthy banker, is giving a ball that night, at which the Masquer has threatened to appear and rob the guests. Fell and Ansel, on their way to the affair, meet a girl dressed as Columbo, seemingly known to Fell, but masked, who accompanies them to the ball. Lucie Ledanois, recently the ward of her uncle, Joseph Maillard, is the Columbo. At the ball, Bob Maillard, son of the banker, again proposes to her and is refused. He offers to buy some of her property. A Franciscan monk interests her. He turns out to be Prince Gramont. In his library Joseph Maillard and a group of his friends are held up and robbed by the Midnight Masquer. Lucie Ledanois, the last of an old family, is in a straitened circumstance. Joseph Maillard's handling of her funds has been unfortunate. Fell is an old friend of her parents and deeply interested in the girl. Henry Gramont, really the Prince de Gramont, is enamored of Lucie. Lucie talks with Fell about her affairs and the Masked Masquer. Gramont's chauffeur, Hammond, sergeant in the A. F. O., lives with him. He was the original Midnight Masquer and Gramont had assumed the role. Where Hammond had been a rubber for financial gain, Gramont, of course, is not. His arrangement to return the "lost" to those whom he has robbed. Gramont and Hammond put the jewels and money in individual packages to be returned the next day. An explanation is included in each.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

Hammond stood staring after the swaggering figure; for once he was speechless. The funny words had sent terror thrilling into him. He started impulsively to pursue that impudent aviator—then he checked himself. Alas! the man possessed something? Had the man known something? Or had those words been only a bit of meaningless impertinence—a chance shaft which had accidentally flown home?

The last conjecture impressed itself on Hammond as being the truth, and his momentary fright died out. He concluded that the incident was not worth mentioning to Gramont, who surely had troubles enough of his own at this juncture.

As for Ben Chacherre, he snarled from the alley, a careless whistle upon his lip. Once out of Hammond's sight, however, he quickened his pace. Turning into a side street, he directed his step toward that part of the old quarter which, in the days before prohibition, had been given over to low cabarets and dives of various sorts. Coming to one of them, which appeared more dirty and desolate than the rest, Chacherre opened a side door and vanished.

He entered what had once been the Red Cat cabaret. At a table in the half-darkened main room sat two men. One of them, who was the proprietor, jerked his chin in an invitation to join him.

A man famous in the underworld circles, a man whose renown rested on curious feats and facts, this proprietor; few crows in the country had not heard the name of Memphis Izzy Gumberts. He was a grizzled old bear now, but in times past he had been the head of a far-fung organization which, on each pay day, covered every army post in the country and diverted into its own pockets about two-thirds of Uncle Sam's payroll—a feat still related in criminal circles as the ne plus ultra of success. Those palmy days were gone, but Memphis Izzy, who had never been "muzzed" in any gallery, sat in his deserted cabaret and still did not lack for power and influence.

The man at his side was apparently not anxious to linger, for he rose and made his farewells as Chacherre approached.

"We have about eighteen cars left," he said to Gumberts. "Charley the Gooch can attend to them, and the place is safe enough. They're up to you. I'm drifting back to Chi."

"Drift along," and Gumberts nodded, a leer in his eyes. His face was broad, heavy-jowled, filled with a keen and forceful craft. "It's a cinch that nobody in this state is gold to interfere with us. About them cars 'from Texas—any news?"

"I've sent orders to bring 'em in next week."

Gumberts nodded again, and the man departed. Into the chair which he had vacated dropped Ben Chacherre, and took from his pocket the money he had obtained at the bank. He laid it on the table before Gumberts.

"There you are," he said. "Amounts you want and all. The boss gives to gimme a receipt."

"Wouldn't trust you, eh?" jeered Gumberts. "Why wouldn't the boss have the money come out of the takin', hey?"

"Wanted to keep separate accounts," said Chacherre.

Gumberts nodded and produced two

large sealed envelopes, which he pushed across the table.

"There's a rakeoff for week before last," he announced. "Last week will be the big business, judgin' from early reports."

Chacherre pocketed the envelopes, lighted a cigarette, and leaned forward.

"Say, Izzy! You got to send a new man down to the Hayou Latouche right away. Lafarge was there, you know; a nigger shot him yesterday. The nigger threatened to squeal unless he got his money back—Lafarge was a fool and didn't know how to handle him. The boss says to shoot a new man down there. Also, he says, you'd better watch out about spreadin' the lottery into Texas and Alabama, account of the government rules."

The heavy features of Gumberts closed in a scowl.

"You tell your boss," he said, "that when it comes to steerin' clear of federal men, I don't want no instructions from nobody! We got every man in this state spotted. Every one that can be fixed is fixed—and that goes for the legislators and politicians clear up the line! Tell your boss to handle the local gov'ment as well as I handle other things, and he'll do all that's necessary. What he'd ought to attend to, for one thing, is this here guy who calls himself the Midnight Masquer. I've told him before that this guy was playin' h—i with my system! See? The quicker Fell goes after him the better for all concerned."

Chacherre laughed, not without a swagger.

"We've attended to all that, Izzy—we've dropped on him and settled



We've Attended to All That, Izzy—
We've Dropped on Him and Settled Him!

him! The guy was doin' it for a carnival joke, that's all. His loot is all goin' back to the owners today. It needn't worry you, anyhow! There was nothin' much to it—jewelry that couldn't be disposed of, for the most part. We couldn't take chances on that sort o' junk."

"I should say not," Gumberts regarded him with a scowl. "You've got the stuff?"

"The boss has. Look here, Izzy, I want you to use a little influence with headquarters on this deal—the boss doesn't want to show his hand there," and leaning forward, Ben Chacherre spoke in a low tone. Then, Gumberts heard him out, chuckled, and nodded assent.

At two that afternoon Henry Gramont was summoned to the telephone. He was greeted by a voice which he did not recognize, but which announced itself promptly.

"This is Mr. Gramont? Police headquarters speakin'. You laid a charge this morning against a fellow named Chacherre?"

"Yes," answered Gramont.

"Must ha' been some mistake, then," came the response. "We thought the prints fitted, but found later they didn't. We looked up the Chacherre guy and found he was workin' steady and strictly O. K. What's more to the point, he proved up a dead sure alibi for the other night."

"Oh!" said Gramont. "Then there's nothing to be done?"

"Not yet. We're workin' on it, and maybe we'll have some news later, Goodby."

Gramont hung up the receiver, a puzzled frown creasing his brow. But, after a minute, he laughed softly—a trace of anger in the laugh.

"Ah!" he murmured. "I congratulate you on your efficiency, Mr. Fell! But now wait a little—and we'll meet again. I think I'm getting somewhere at last, and I'll have a surprise for you one of these days!"

CHAPTER VII.

In the Open.

In New Orleans the carnival season is always opened by the ball of the

Twelfth Night Revelers soon after Christmas, and is closed by that of the Krewe of Comus on Mardi Gras night. Upon this evening of "Fat Tuesday," indeed, both Rex and Comus hold forth. Rex is the popular ball, the affair of the people, and is held in the Athenaeum. From here, about midnight, the king and queen proceed to Comus ball.

Comus is an assembly of such rigid exclusiveness that even the tickets to the gallery are considered social prizes. The personae of the Krewe, on this particular year, as in all previous ones, would remain unknown; there is no unmasking at Comus. This institution, a tremendous social power and potentially a financial power also, during decades of the city's life, is held absolutely above any taint of favoritism or commercialism. Even the families of those concerned might not always be certain whether their sons and brothers belonged to the Krewe of Comus.

Henry Gramont did not attend the ball of Proteus on Monday night. Instead, he sat in his own room, while through the streets of the French quarter outside was raging the carnival at its height. Before him were maps and reports upon the gas and oil fields about Bayou Terrebonne—fields where great domes of natural gas were already located and in use, and where oil was being found in some quantity. Early on Wednesday morning Gramont intended to set forth to his work. He had been engaged to make a report to Bob Maillard's company, and he would make it. Then he would resign his advisory job, and be free. A smile curled his lips as he thought of young Maillard and the company.

"The young gentleman will be sadly surprised to discover that I've gotten out from under—and that his respected father holds my stock," he reflected. "That was a good deal! I lost a thousand to old Maillard in order to have the balance of thirty thousand!"

A knock at his door interrupted the thread of his thought. Gramont opened, to find the concierge with a note which had been left at the door below by a masked Harlequin, who had then disappeared without awaiting any reply.

Gramont recognized the writing on the envelope, and hastened to the note inside. His face changed, however, as he read it:

"Please call promptly at eleven tomorrow morning. I wish to see you upon a matter of business."

"LUCIE LEDANOIS"

Gramont gazed long at this note, his brows drawn down into a harsh line. It was not like Lucie in its tone, somehow; he sensed something sinister, something vaguely but mostly decidedly out of tune. "Eleven tomorrow morning, eh?" he murmured. "That's queer, too, for she's to be at the Proteus ball tonight. Most girls would not be conducting business affairs at eleven in the morning, after being up all night at Proteus! It must be something important. Besides, she's not in a class with anyone else. She's a rare girl; no nonsense in her—fall of a deep, strong sense of things."

He forced himself from thoughts of Lucie, forced himself from her personality, and returned to his reports with an effort of concentration.

When Gramont went to bed that night it was with a startling and audacious scheme well defined in his brain; a scheme whose first conception seemed ludicrous and impossible, yet which, on second consideration, appeared in a very different light. It deserved serious thought—and Gramont had made his decision before he went to sleep.

The following day was Tuesday—Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday, the last day before Lent began, and the final culminating day of carnival. Henry Gramont, however, was destined to find little in its beginning of much personal pleasure.

At eleven in the morning Hammond drove him to the Ledanois home, where Gramont was admitted by one of the colored servants and shown into the parlor. A moment later Lucie herself appeared. At first glance her smiling greeting removed the half-sensed apprehensions of Gramont. Almost immediately afterward, however, he noted a perceptible change in her manner, as she led him toward the rear of the room, and gestured toward a mahogany tilt-top table which stood in a corner.

"Come over here, please. I have something which I wish to show you."

She needed to say no more. Gramont, following her, found himself staring blankly down at the symbol of consternation which overwhelmed him. For upon that table lay all those boxes which he himself had packed with the loot of the Midnight Masquer—the identical boxes, apparently unopened, which had been stolen from his automobile by the supposed thief, Chacherre!

"Tell me, Henry Gramont, what mad impulse brought you to all this?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Kitchen Cabinet

(By Mrs. W. W. Weaver, Newspaper Union)

The richest man, whatever his lot, is he who's content with what he's got. "I'm tired of 'musts'!" said Dorothy D. "I'm tired of 'musts' as I can be."

SEASONABLE IDEAS

Take time to enjoy the lovely out-of-doors during the warm weather, for in the northern climate we are shut in so many weeks of the year that we need to store up the beauty in the blossoming tree, and the message in the way-side flower.

This is the time when fruits of all kinds must be put away for winter, just when it is the most enjoyable to be out of doors. If one plans ahead, much out of door life may be enjoyed in one's own back yard, or on one's porch.

The jars for the fruit may be sterilized, then sealed and when cool the fruit may be picked over in some slightly out-of-door spot, the jars filled and when all are ready, filled with hot water, covered not too tightly, placed in the oven on a cloth or folds of paper dipped in water in a dripping pan and baked in the oven. When the berries have boiled, remove seal and put away for winter. This method is a good one for the busy housewife as it does away with the hot open kettle cooking. The fruit has a lovely color and the flavor is well preserved.

Delicious Uncooked Grape Jelly.—Crush the ripe fruit, drain and mix with twice as much sugar as juice; stir well until the sugar is dissolved, then pour into jelly glasses. The next day the jelly will be firm enough to cover and pack away.

Buttermilk Soup.—Heat a quart of buttermilk in a double boiler; when boiling stir in two tablespoonsful of flour that has been rubbed smooth in a little cold milk. Stir until the flour is cooked, then serve hot.

Grape Sherbet.—Take three pounds of Concord grapes, three lemons, three pints of water and three cupsful of sugar. Wash the grapes and put them into a colander, wash and squeeze out all the juice, measure the juice, and add equal quantity of water to the sugar, boil to a rather thick syrup and add three water to equal the amount before boiling, combine the fruit juice and syrup and freeze.

The causes of failure are: No positive aim in life, no special preparation, lack of appreciation of the many opportunities for self-improvement in youth, desire to be in the swim of fashion and pleasure, haste to get rich—ambitions.

HOMELY MEAT DISHES

The common cuts of meat which sell for five cents and more a pound—cheaper than the steaks and roasts, have more of the attractive which give the flavor to meat, and if they are well cooked are tender and appetizing.

Brown Stew.—Take four pounds of meat of the shoulder, neck or part of the leg of beef, cut in inch-sized cubes and brown one-half of the meat in a little hot fat stirring until all are well browned, season well, then add the uncooked meat and enough water to simmer, adding a very little water from time to time, an hour before serving add potatoes and one chopped onion, dredge with a little flour, add more seasonings and continue to simmer until the vegetables are tender. Carrots, cabbage, peas and other vegetables may be added if desired. Serve on a platter with the meat in the center, potatoes around the meat and a thickened gravy poured over all.

Broiled Hamburger.—Take two pounds of round steak, chop fine, add one-quarter of a teaspoonful of pepper, 1½ teaspoonfuls of salt, one small onion finely chopped and a pinch of powdered cloves. Mix well and make into a large flat cake. Place on a well-greased broiler and turn every eight counts until it is well seared, then cook slowly until as well cooked as desired.

Scotch Stew.—Take three to four pounds of mutton from the fore quarters, one onion, one turnip, one carrot, one-half cupful of barley, two stalks of celery, one tablespoonful of flour and salt and pepper to taste. Soak the barley overnight, cut the meat in small pieces, put into the kettle with the barley, add two cupfuls of boiling water and simmer until the meat is tender. Chop the vegetables and cook them five minutes in a little fat, then add to the meat and finish cooking.

Barrel Potatoes.—Peel the number of potatoes to be served. One-half hour before the roast is done roll the potatoes in the fat in the pan so that they are well covered with fat, then cook until soft, on a top burner. Serve around the roast.

Popcorn Marguerites.—Make a syrup of one cupful of sugar, one tablespoonful of vinegar and boil until it threads; then pour it upon the whites of two eggs. Beat until thick, then stir in three cupfuls of freshly popped corn; spread wafers with the mixture and bake in the oven until brown.

Neenie Maxwell



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Wrong Conclusions

Paul, like all healthy boys, was fond of playing outdoors, and his boys' pants were usually got himself shamelessly dirty. He was about to go down to dinner one evening when his mother happened to notice the soiled condition of his pants, and sent him out to the kitchen to wash them.

"You dirty little boy!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw the heap of water in which he had perched the required ablutions. "How in the world do you manage to get your hands so dirty?"

"That didn't all come from my hands," indignantly answered Paul. "I washed my face in that water, too!"—*Millwaukee Sentinel.*

Self-Help Is Best

"Do you believe in the efficacy of prayer?" asked the young person. "I believe it gets the best results when accompanied by a little muscular exertion," said Mr. Gadgery. "A man of my acquaintance has been asked the good Lord to make him rich for 30 years, but he would have started to death if he hadn't had an industrious wife."—*Birmingham Age-Herald.*

Every man likes a cap, but when he looks into the mirror it often doesn't make him happy.



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NATIVE CONVERTS AT MEET

Peking Gathering Shows the Spread of Christianity in Countries of the Far East

In early weeks of missionary conference movements in non-Christian lands were often represented by workers from Christian lands who were laboring in the foreign field. To the recent conference held in Peking of the World's Student Christian Federation, however, the various movements sent as delegates sons and daughters of the soil, 64 of the 24 Japanese delegates only two were non-Japanese. Of the nine from India all but three were Indians, of the six representing Korea only one was a foreigner; of the nine from Siam and Siamers all but one were citizens of those lands, and all of the 12 representing the Philippine Islands were Filipinos.

Sound Vibrations

It is reported that certain experiments have shown that a vibration of sound having an amplitude of less than one-twentieth of an inch of a centimeter could still affect the sense of hearing. Such a vibration would be so short that it would have to be enlarged one hundred times before the most powerful microscope could render it visible, supposing that it were capable of being seen at all. Old persons, it is said, do not hear high notes which are audible in young persons, and there is reason to believe that babies hear notes that are inaudible to their elders.—*New York Herald.*

Plan to End Soapstone Waste

An eighth of a ton of the soapstone quarry in the United States is waste, but it is planned to utilize this waste as a substitute for low grade talc.

Chestnut bell of 30 years ago went out of fashion because it had to be rung all the time.

My babies had colic
Mrs. Winslow's Syrup
it cured him

Marshall, Mo.
Dear Sir:
I have used Mrs. Winslow's Syrup for many years for my three babies and it has proved successful. One of my babies had colic and I gave him Mrs. Winslow's Syrup. It certainly was fine, for it cured him.
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